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ABSTRACT

The 1988 School Reform Act (Illinois PA 85-1418) mandated that Chicago's public schools be managed locally by school-based management councils. Principals in Chicago public schools work with their local school councils (LSCs) to effect plans concerning school management, budgeting, school improvement, staffing, and curricular concerns. This report presents findings of a study that investigated Chicago principals' and school councils' perceptions of the principalship under school reform. Data were derived from two surveys, one of the principal and one of the LSC chairperson of each school. A total of 319 principals from elementary and high schools responded. Because the chairperson response was low, only the findings of the principal survey are presented. Interviews were also conducted with the principal and LSC chair at each of 25 schools. The surveys examined principals' perceptions of their roles in the following areas--administration, instructional leadership, school personnel selection, budget, school improvement plan, and leadership. Conclusions are: (1) principals' roles and responsibilities have been greatly expanded, but their degree of instructional involvement has been reduced; (2) most principals share decision-making with their LSCs, including preparation of the school budget; and (3) principals perceive their leadership role as collaborative. However, principals need help in identifying resources and in receiving training and support. Nine recommendations are offered. Twenty-two tables and an appendix containing the surveys are included. Contains 30 references. (LMI)

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# REPORT

## RESEARCH, EVALUATION & PLANNING

ED 373 418

# THE PRINCIPALSHIP UNDER SCHOOL REFORM AS PERCEIVED BY PRINCIPALS AND LOCAL SCHOOL COUNCILS

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## CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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General Superintendent of Schools

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# THE PRINCIPALSHIP UNDER SCHOOL REFORM AS PERCEIVED BY PRINCIPALS AND LOCAL SCHOOL COUNCILS

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**CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

September 1992

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# INTRODUCTION

## 1985 School Reform Act

School-based management councils are now mandated by law in more than 75 percent of the United States (Lewis, 1989). In Illinois, the first School Reform Act was passed in 1985 when legislation was created for school-based management councils called Local School Improvement Councils (LSICs). These LSICs were appointed in Chicago public schools by the principal and performed in an advisory capacity. LSIC involvement was encouraged in planning school improvements and in reviewing school spending priorities. However, in 1988, a coalition of citizens, reformers and business leaders decided that the LSICs were having little effect on school improvement and, therefore, pressed for more extensive reforms (Fitch, 1991).

## 1988 School Reform Act

In December 1988, the efforts of the coalitionists resulted in the most radical reform legislation in the nation to date: The School Reform Act (Illinois PA 85-1418).

The intention of the reform groups was for schools to adopt and implement effective educational strategies. In the early 80s, the emphasis was on teacher and student improvement. During the mid 80s, the emphasis turned to the instructional leadership of the principal and teacher-parent empowerment through school-based management and shared decision-making.

The 1988 School Reform Act mandated that Chicago's public schools be managed locally by school-based management councils (Fitch, 1990, p. 5). Members on these councils are elected every two years. They include six parents, two community residents, two teachers, and the principal. The parent members have a majority vote on these Local School Councils (LSC). The LSCs provide many of the same functions at the local level that were formerly provided by the central administrative office for the entire school system. LSC responsibilities include:

- Evaluating the principal's performance and deciding if his/her four-year contract should be renewed.
- Approving the school expenditure plan prepared by the principal in consultation with the LSC and the Professional Personnel Advisory Committee (PPAC).
- Approving the School Improvement Plan (SIP) developed by the principal in consultation with the LSC, staff, parents, and community residents.
- Monitoring the principal's implementation of the SIP and budget.

## The Principal's Expanded Role under School Reform

The key individual in the Chicago reform effort is the school principal who must work with the LSC team to effect plans regarding school management, budgeting, school improvement, staffing, and curricular concerns. This shared decision-making process/consensus marks a change from the traditional top-down leadership structure in

which the principal made unilateral decisions and then implemented them. Prior to the 1989-90 school year, Chicago principals functioned and were supervised under the direction of the General Superintendent of Schools and the subdistrict superintendents. Principals implemented an instructional program according to standardized curriculum guides and the budget developed by the central office. They had limited authority in the selection of their teachers and other school staff. After three years of successful service, principals were tenured.

Reform implementation brought changes in the role of the principal. Instead of tenure, the principals now receive four-year contracts when hired by their Local School Councils. Further, their responsibilities have expanded to include:

- Selection of school staff
- Development and implementation of the three-year School Improvement Plan
- Development and monitoring of the local school budget
- Development of their school curriculum, consistent with systemwide objectives and standards
- Monitoring the work of their school engineer-custodian and lunchroom manager and their respective subordinates
- Providing staff development for their school educational program
- Remediating poorly performing personnel
- Terminating unremediated personnel.

**Adjusting to Changes**

The changes brought about by school reform have not always been easy for principals. During the first three years of reform, a significant number of resignations, transfers, and departures took place among principals. "One sixth of the city's principals chose to retire early when the reform act was signed" (Bradley, 1992). Others were replaced by their Local School Councils. Currently, nearly 40 percent of Chicago public school principals are new "employees" in their current schools.

Today's principals must learn to adjust to the new and sometimes difficult demands of their expanded responsibilities and roles. In addition to increased demands of their time, the principals have to develop new working relationships and models of communication within the school community and the school system. Nevertheless, few clear and comprehensive guidelines exist that address situations encountered by the principals and LSCs. As a result, many questions regarding procedural practices remain unresolved. For example, not all Local School Councils are trained in or familiar with their roles, the purpose of the council, or school issues and topics. This can result in tension and stress within councils. As for the principals, concern has been expressed over such issues as whether or not LSC members may try to circumvent them in order to become directly involved in situations such as teacher evaluation (Ford, p.6). As Fitch (1990) indicates, the question underlying the tension generated by school reform in Chicago seems to be "Who's the boss?"

**Purpose of This Study**

This study has the following purpose:

1. To determine how the nature of the principalship is being changed by school reform and how principals and council members perceive the role of the principal in relation to school administration, instructional leadership,

personnel selection, budget development, and the creation of the school improvement plan.

2. To ascertain the Chicago principals' experiences with site-based management and how the procedures mandated by reform are practiced in the schools by the principal and LSCs in the areas of school administration, instructional leadership, personnel selection, budget, and planning for school improvement.

3. To discover what points of agreement and disagreement exist between principals and their council members.

4. To identify the principals' training needs.

**Design of the Study**

Two surveys were used to collect data for this study. The purpose of the initial survey was to determine which schools developed or revised local school policies after school reform went into effect. Respondents were asked what steps or procedures were used to develop the policy and who was involved in implementing or monitoring it (Appendix A). Both the principal and the LSC chairperson of each school were chosen to participate in the study because they were deemed the best sources of information.

Since District Service Centers hold monthly meetings for the local school administrators in order to distribute and communicate important administrative information, this provided an opportunity to meet principals personally and explain the purpose of the study, the survey instruments, and the importance of their participation. Personnel from the Department of Research, Evaluation and Planning contacted the District Service Center personnel and requested this project be placed on the center's meeting agenda. Additional survey questionnaires, along with a letter explaining the study and its importance and a return envelope were given to the District Service Center administrative assistants for absent principals to complete.

LSC chairpersons were contacted by mail. A letter outlining the purpose of the study and its importance along with the survey questionnaire and a return envelope were enclosed. In addition, in order to increase the number of returns by LSC chairpersons, principals were provided with a copy of the LSC chairperson's survey.

As a result, 319 surveys from principals in regular elementary and high schools were returned. Since the rate of return for the LSC chairpersons was very low, only the principals' surveys were used.

Survey findings yielded five main categories:

1. No policy implemented or revised (N=150)

2. LSC initiated policy revision or implementation (N=51)

3. Principal initiated and carried out policy revision or implementation (N=67)

4. Principal initiated policy revision or implementation; carried out by LSC (N=5)

5. Principal initiated policy revisions or implementation; monitored by LSC (N=46)

For purposes of this study, categories 4 and 5 were combined.

In addition to using the preceding categories, the following three criteria were also used in sample selection:

- School socioeconomic status or poverty level. [Poverty level was based on the percentage of students receiving free lunch, divided into three levels of socioeconomic status ranging from low to high. The three levels were: (1) 71-100 percent; (2) 36-70 percent; and (3) 00-35 percent].
- School location (north, south, and central sections of the city).
- School type (regular or magnet elementary and high schools).

Since only regular and magnet elementary and high schools were included in the population for this study, the sample size was reduced to 508. Five percent (25 schools) were selected for the study. In the selection process, the schools were classified according to the previously mentioned five categories. These categories were cross-tabulated by school type, poverty level, and location. The principal and LSC chair were interviewed at each school. If the chair was unavailable, the LSC secretary was asked to participate. The purpose of including the LSC member in the study was to assess the degree of agreement between principal and Local School Council member responses regarding the implementation of school reform.

To prevent bias, schools in the following categories were eliminated from the study: (a) those in which the principal did not receive a contract from the LSC and (b) those that were on a list of proposed closings. These schools were replaced with schools from a random list of replacement schools.

The selected sample was found to be most representative when compared to the principal population in 1989 and 1992 in terms of age and gender.

| | **Median Age** | **Male** | **Female** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1989 | 55 | 54% | 46% |
| Sample | 53 | 52% | 48% |
| 1992 | 51 | 50% | 50% |

**Instruments Used in the Study**

Two questionnaires were developed, one for the principal and one for the Local School Council, to determine how each perceived the effect of reform on the Chicago Public Schools. Both questionnaires included the following categories:

- Administration
- Instructional Leadership
- School Personnel Selection
- Budget
- School Improvement Plan
- Leadership.

Most of the questions were open-ended and compared principals' perceptions of their roles with respect to the above categories before and after implementation of school reform. They

were asked to assess the impact of reform on their daily administrative responsibilities relating to student activities, teacher supervision, and public relations. Information was elicited from both the LSC member and principal in each school on how they perceived the principal's leadership style and suggestions were requested for making the principals' role in the Chicago public school system more effective under school reform.

The questions in both survey instruments were essentially the same. The exceptions pertained exclusively to the responding group (Appendix B).

The Department of Research, Evaluation and Planning sent letters to principals and LSC chairs explaining the purpose of the study and assuring them of confidentiality in their responses. Research staff conducted personal interviews with the principals. Since most LSC respondents were unavailable during the day, most of their interviews were conducted by telephone.

**Analysis of Collected Data**

Content analysis was the technique used to assess the collected interview data. Responses from principals and LSCs members to each question were read and coded separately. Codes for similar or identical content were combined under a specific title or category along with the accumulated frequency and corresponding percentage. The percentage is the ratio of the number of responses out of 25 (the number of schools in the study).

Data analysis was completed for the following six areas: Administration, Instructional Leadership, School Personnel Selection, Budget, School Improvement Plan, and Leadership. Principals' and Local School Council members' frequencies were compared for agreement by using the *Chi-Square Test of Association*. Given the sample proportion and sample size, upper and lower limits for the population proportion were obtained at .95 confidence coefficient. If the lower limit of the confidence interval was greater than zero, then that frequency was considered significantly different from zero and reported.

**Limitations of the Study**

The responses provided by the principals and LSCs in this study are informative; however, caution should be exercised in making generalizations based on these responses for two reasons:

- A limited, albeit representative sample, was employed.
- Interview data represent only the LSCs' and principals' perceptions. In future case studies, pertinent data can be provided through close observations of the school operations; reviews of school newsletters, memos, minutes from LSC meetings; and examination of training materials, needs assessment data, school improvement plans, and curricular materials. Systemwide indicators can be used to assess reform progress at each school site.

# SURVEY FINDINGS

## ADMINISTRATION

Prior to reform, administrative decisions such as hiring, removing and promoting principals, selecting staff, and allocating budget items were primarily handled by central office personnel. Under reform, the responsibility for these areas was transferred to the local schools from the central office. Local School Councils (LSCs) were formed for each of the city's public schools (Fitch, 1990). The LSC's responsibilities include:

- Evaluating principal performance and deciding if his/her four-year contract should be renewed.
- Approving the school expenditure plan prepared by the principal in consultation with the LSC and the Professional Personnel Advisory Committee (PPAC).
- Approving the School Improvement Plan (SIP) developed by the principal in consultation with the LSC, staff, parents, and community residents.
- Monitoring the principal's implementation of the SIP and budget.
- Making recommendations on certain issues such as attendance and disciplinary policies at the local school.

The principal's responsibilities, as stipulated in their four-year contract, include:

- Selecting school staff
- Developing and implementing the three-year SIP
- Developing and implementing budget expenditures
- Developing local curriculum consistent with systemwide goals and objectives
- Serving as chief executive officer (CEO) of the school
- Monitoring the work of the engineer-custodian and lunchroom manager
- Providing staff development relative to the school's specific goals, objectives, and needs
- Remediating poorly performing personnel
- Terminating unremediated personnel.

Tables 1 through 6 provide the survey's findings as to how the principals' perceived their administrative role before and after reform and how it was impacted by LSCs, which responsibilities have changed significantly, and how and in what areas the principals' daily routine has changed. Each table is followed by commentary. The section concludes with a summary.

**TABLE 1**

Principal: **What is your perception of the principal's present role in the Chicago Public Schools?**

| | Response Category | Principal Frequency | Council Frequency |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Instructional/ educational leader | 14 (56%) | 6 (24%) |
| 2. | Chief executive officer | 8 (32%) | 13(52%) |
| 3. | In charge of school personnel | 0 | 2 ( 8%) |
| 4. | Responsible for school funds | 2 ( 8%) | 3(12%) |
| 5. | Resource/facilitator person | 4 (16%) | 0 |
| 6. | Public relations/politician (working with parents, community, and LSCs) | 7 (28%) | 7 (28%) |
| 7. | Dealing with paper work | 5 (20%) | 1 ( 4%) |

N=25

Principals categorized their roles into three major areas:

- Chief executive officer (CEO)
- Politician (in a positive sense)
- Instructional leader

These aspects have greater and lesser importance at particular times during the yearly school cycle. The percentage of agreement between principal and council respondents regarding the principal's roles is low. Most councils see their principals as CEOs, but most principals see themselves as educational and instructional leaders.

All principals in this study saw themselves "wearing two or more hats." In addition to being an instructional leader and chief executive officer implementing school policy and operating a functioning school (the expected role of principals before reform), they now perceive themselves as assuming additional roles such as politician (working with parents, community, and LSCs), resource consultant, and administrator (dealing with paper work).

In many cases, the principal as a resource facilitator is a role little known by the general public. The role includes providing instructional guidance to staff members or directing staff to the appropriate sources for needed materials and knowledge.

An elementary principal indicated a greatly expanded role:

> It requires one to be instructional leader, supervisor, counselor, and a resource person for staff, students and parents. As a member of the council, it adds additional responsibilities we didn't have before. In the case here, some of the responsibilities which should be the council's, fall into my lap, for example, making the agenda, getting information together for meetings, getting flyers and letters out to the public, making various contacts on behalf of the council. Originally, we did none of it.

The principal of another school indicated that he has become more involved in the instructional program while relinquishing and delegating daily administration and mediation tasks to subordinates:

> Of course in many situations there is always an appeal to the principal. The time required to be a principal is increasing since I must now meet the needs and expectations of more constituent groups.

One important finding is that principals perceive their roles as multi-faceted. While 56 percent of the principals in this study see themselves as instructional leaders, 32 percent indicated a perception of being a CEO as well. One could assume that all principals would emphasize the instructional leadership role since the ultimate intent of the reform legislation is to improve student achievement. It could be that new responsibilities such as dealing with the public and LSCs, school budget, staff selection, and especially the demands of increased paper work takes a greater proportion of the principals' time. As one principal indicated "All the extra work put on the principal takes away from our true roles as educational leaders."

**TABLE 2**

Principal: **How did you perceive your role before school reform?**

Local School Council: **How did you perceive the principal's role before reform?**

| Response Category | Principal Frequency | Council Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Similar/same/ not that different | 12 (48%) | 13 (52%) |
| 2. There were fewer interruptions | 6 (24%) | 5 (20%) |
| 3. Principal was less accountable | 5 (20%) | 1 (4%) |
| 4. Principal was more involved in school leadership roles | 4 (16%) | 1 (4%) |
| 5. Less need for politics | 4 (12%) | 7 (28%) |
| 6. Principals were more constricted by central office | 3 (12%) | 3 (12%) |

N=25

The principal's role before school reform and today does not vary in the perception of about half the respondents. Across the schools in the sample, 14 principals and councils shared an identical view of the principals' role with nine of these 14 agreeing that there was little or no role change. About half of the respondents who perceived a change noted that now there are many more demands on the principal. Five principals indicated that since reform they are more accountable, there is a need for dealing with political realities, and central office imperatives have been lessened because now fewer decisions are made by the central administration.

There is agreement on the types of response categories between the principals and LSCs for this question. As noted, a significant number (about half) of the principals and LSCs reported "little" to "no change" in the perceived role of the principal prior to and after implementation of reform. Possible reasons for this opinion are:

- Principals resist relinquishing their traditional role
- LSCs are not totally involved in the principals' areas of responsibility and permit principals to manage as they did before reform
- Principals are very efficient and/or trusted by LSCs
- LSCs feel that the principals have greater knowledge and expertise in handling certain situations
- Principals applied the idea of shared decision-making prior to reform.

Both principals and LSCs reported that before reform there were fewer interruptions in daily routines. Today there is an increase in meetings, phone calls, and required paper work. They also stated that prior to reform there was less need for political activity. Now principals are working wi h community members, parents, and school staff and often have to make consensual decisions. Since principal performance evaluation and issuance of a four-year contract are decisions made by LSCs, it is most important for principals to have interpersonal and group decision-making skills.

**TABLE 3**

Principal: **How has school reform affected your administrative decision-making?**

Local School Council: **How has school reform affected your principal's administrative decision making?**

| | Response Category | Principal Frequency | Council Frequency |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Little or no change | 11 (44%) | 10 (40%) |
| 2. | School decisions are shared | 17 (68%) | 9 (36%) |
| 3. | Principal has to share with LSC but is still primary decision-maker | 6 (24%) | 8 (32%) |
| 4. | Significant role change | 6 (24%) | 3 (12%) |

N=25

Eleven principals and 10 LSCs (about 40 percent) stated that since school reform there is little or no change in the principal's administrative decision making role. Even though the principal was the primary decision-maker in some instances, a substantial number (23 principals and 17 LSCs) indicated that decisions are shared. This could be an indication that some principals practiced shared decision-making prior to reform; therefore, it was not considered a significant change. A few principals may continue to make some unilateral decisions.

**TABLE 4**

Principal: **What are the most significant areas in which school reform has affected your responsibilities as principal?**

| | Response Category | Principal Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Increased responsibility (generally) | 6 (24%) |
| 2. | Human relations | 6 (24%) |
| 3. | Less time on instruction, classroom visitation, and teacher supervision | 5 (20%) |
| 4. | Increased accountability | 4 (16%) |
| 5. | Increased time on LSC meetings and the budget | 4 (16%) |

N=25

Only principals responded to this question. Their answers highlight the changing role and new demands of the principalship.

Principals indicated increased responsibility in school planning and accountability in the use of both discretionary and other funds. The majority of the principals indicated spending time attending meetings, dealing with human relations situations, and working with Local School Council members. These activities take the principal away from working more directly with staff and students on instructional issues.

There is some indication that even though the mechanics of school reform are currently being addressed, schools must begin to make decisions that impact on improving student outcomes.

**TABLE 5**

Principal: **How has the LSC affected your leadership in school?**

Local School Council: **How has the LSC affected your principal's leadership?**

| | Response Category | Principal Frequency | Council Frequency |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Very little | 16 (64%) | 12 (48%) |
| 2. | Increased communication (among the LSC, staff, etc.) | 6 (24%) | 4 (16%) |
| 3. | Redefined leadership role | 4 (16%) | 5 (20%) |
| 4. | Empowerment of others | 3 (12%) | 3 (12%) |

N=25

Nearly two-thirds of the principals indicated that their leadership and role perception has been affected very little by the LSC and almost half of the council members agreed with this perception. This is consistent with the findings reported in Tables 2 and 3.

Both principals and LSCs reported that communication among the principal, school staff, community representatives, and parents increased, indicating that principals continue to develop and hone their communication skills. Responses from principals also indicated that dialogue and suggestions from staff and community are considered more frequently.

Some principals and council members stated that the principal's leadership role has been redefined by the LSC. Decisions pertaining to discretionary funds, curriculum, personnel, and other matters which often were unilateral are now shared with and/or approved by the Local School Council.

Council members and principals in three schools indicated that with added knowledge and new practices, empowerment of various members in the school community is now occurring.

**TABLE 6**

Principal: **How has school reform changed your daily routine?**

| | Response Category | Principal Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Reduced time for instructional supervision | 7 (28%) |
| 2. | Increased amount of paper work | 7 (28%) |
| 3. | Increased number of meetings | 6 (24%) |
| 4. | Expanded responsibilities | 5 (20%) |
| 5. | Not much change | 3 (12%) |

N=25

This question was asked only of the principals and brought multiple responses.

The daily routine of principals has changed. Although reform legislation mandates that a majority of the principals' time should be spent on staff development and instructional supervision, principals indicate that their time for these activities has been reduced.

Principals also reported that their daily routine has been altered by shifting time allocation from instructional activities to LSC matters. These included meeting with the council as a whole, meeting with individual council members, responding to council members' questions, and working on requests which require extensive paper work. Ten principals also cited concerns as to how their time was spent. Five specifically noted they had to work well beyond the regular school day in order to meet the demands placed on them by their new and expanded responsibilities.

## ADMINISTRATION
## SUMMARY

Principals' responsibilities have expanded since implementation of reform. In addition to serving as instructional leaders or chief executive officers, they are also responsible for developing school budgets and school improvement plans, as well as selecting school personnel. They have become resource contacts and politicians who deal with students, parents, community representatives, school staff, and business people.

These new responsibilities created under school reform are increasingly time-consuming. In addition, principals must spend a significant amount of time at meetings, especially outside of their school buildings. As a consequence, principals find there is insufficient time left to spend on instructional activities even though this is a specific requirement of reform legislation. This was a problem consistently cited by both principals and LSCs.

Over half of the principals and LSCs did not see a significant change in the role of the principal after reform was instituted. The principals, however, now feel that they are more accountable. Before reform they had minimum control over major school decisions since almost all of these were made by the central office. Today, both major and minor decisions are made locally with the LSC. Individual schools now have more flexibility in spending discretionary moneys, hiring school staff, developing local curriculum, and maintaining school discipline and attendance.

Both principals and council representatives reported that some school decision-making is shared. Only four principals and two council members felt that the principals' power had diminished.

## INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Improving the instructional program has always been a foremost function of the principal. A principal's ability to guide school staff in planning, implementing, and evaluating the total school curriculum can make a difference in whether or not that school succeeds (Lipham, 1981). Research findings show that successful schools have principals who--

- are committed to instructional improvement (Wellisch, et. al., 1978)
- have a strong knowledge of and participate in classroom instructional activities (Austin, 1979, Blumberg & Greenfield, 1980)
- monitor the effective use of classroom time (Fisher et. al., 1978; Denham & Lieberman, 1980)
- provide for effective instructional programming (Klausmeier, Lipham, & Daresh, 1983)
- have a positive attitude toward staff and students (Clark, Lotto, & McCarthy, 1980; Ianni & Reuss-Ianni, 1980; Olivero, 1980; Squires, Huitt & Segars, 1983).

The empirical study by Heck, Larsen, and Marcoulides (1990) supports the theory that the principal's instructional leadership affects student achievement.

Reform legislation (Public Act 85-1418) requires that principals devote the majority of their time to instructional leadership. Elements of instructional leadership, as defined in *A Principals' Handbook* (Chicago Board of Education, 1990) include, but are not limited to--

- establishing learning goals and objectives
- planning activities and creating programs to meet the goals and objectives
- identifying materials for learning
- deciding upon the evaluation criteria and means of assessment
- planning staff development appropriate to areas of need
- identifying educational needs peculiar to the local school and community and devising programs to address those needs
- utilizing current information from research to guide curriculum as well as program and staff development decisions.

It is further stated in *A Principals' Handbook*:

> These decisions are made collaboratively--with frequent and sincere involvement of the LSC, the PPAC, and other committees within the school. . . .The 1988 School Reform Act states that the Chicago Public Schools must provide uniform curriculum objectives and standards that reflect multicultural diversity. To ensure a common learning experience for all, local schools must adhere to state mandates and systemwide curriculum standards and objectives when they customize curriculum to reflect local needs/interests. (pp. v-1)

Since researchers are interested in how instructional activities were affected by reform, the survey questioned principals about the types of instructional activities with which they were involved prior to reform. Table 7 provides the results of those findings.

**TABLE 7**

Principal: **What instructional activities were you involved in prior to school reform?**

| | Response Category | Principal Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Classroom visitation | 10 (40%) |
| 2. | Instructional activities | 5 (20%) |
| 3. | Staff development | 8 (32%) |
| 4. | Lesson plan review | 5 (20%) |
| 5. | Was not principal before | 4 (16%) |

N=25

Prior to reform, the range of responses was limited to four. A more detailed enumeration regarding the elements of instructional activities (e.g., evaluation) had been expected. Data show that, prior to reform, principals were generally involved in staff development and different aspects of instruction as well as classroom visitations.

Principals were asked if there were any significant changes in their involvement in instructional activities since school reform was implemented. A majority, 68 percent, responded "yes" and 32 percent, "no." Seventeen principals noted significant changes in their involvement in instructional activities. In eight schools, it appeared that principals and LSCs were in agreement that the principal's involvement with the instructional program was the same as that prior to reform.

Principals were asked about changes in their involvement in three instructional activities: teachers' lesson plans, staff development, and assisting in classroom instruction. Table 8 presents a summary of their responses.

**TABLE 8**

Principal: **Have there been any significant changes in your involvement in the following instructional activities since school reform was implemented?**

- **Teachers' lesson plans**
- **Staff development**
- **Assisting in classroom instruction**

| Response Category | Principal Frequency |
|---|---|
| 1. Instructional activities are localized. | 7 (28%) |
| 2. More discretionary money is available to spend on staff development. | 6 (24%) |
| 3. Less time is available-- | 12 (48%) |
| • for reviewing lesson plans and visiting classroom | 10 (40%) |
| • in general. | 2 ( 8%) |
| 4. There is more involvement with LSC and parents. | 4 (16%) |

N=25

Principals indicated a wide range of involvement in instructional activities since school reform began. These activities included:

- Evaluating and monitoring instruction
- Providing staff development to meet school needs
- Providing feedback on lessons
- Using resource personnel to enhance instruction
- Participating in instruction
- Reviewing student work.

Principals emphasized that classroom visitation and staff development were no longer conducted in the supervisor/subordinate fashion, but as a cooperative and collaborative effort which provided the basis for curriculum development and improved teaching practice. This was further enhanced by teachers sharing in staff development and having the opportunity for staff intervisitation. Only one principal indicated no involvement in instructional activities.

Experienced principals suggest that one of the significant changes since reform is the lack of time for involvement in instructional activities. Forty percent of the responses suggest that there is less time available for the review of lesson plans and visits to classrooms. This indicates that the principals require more task-management skills or additional resources in order to handle efficiently newly required responsibilities at the local school level.

The frequency of involvement in instructional activities is lower than what one might expect. The law states:

> A majority of the time spent by a principal shall be spent on curriculum and staff development through formal and informal

> activities, establishing clear lines of communication regarding school goals, accomplishments, practices and policies with parents and teachers. (Ch. 122, IL. School Code Par. 34-8.1).

Other reported changes in the area of instructional leadership concern site-specific instructional activities and flexibility in spending discretionary moneys on staff development. To quote a principal:

> Staff development is now a school function. We're doing Whole Language, Great Books, and a variety of teacher requested innovations. At my school, 45 teachers have volunteered to come in for two days of staff development this year.

An elementary school principal reported:

> I collect lesson plans every week. I look at them and if I find something interesting I go to see the lesson and it's a good way to keep on top of what's going on. I don't do more than manage the staff development. I don't teach it. I don't feel competent to be a teacher of teachers. I don't build the engine, but I keep it running.

The principals' responses indicate that LSCs and parents are not involved in instructional issues although school reform legislation requires participatory decision-making in education by parents, community members, principals, and school staff. The absence of expertise in instructional issues among both the LSCs' and parents' could be a reason for their lack of involvement in this area.

## INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP
## SUMMARY

Significant changes have occurred since reform regarding principals' involvement in instructional activities. Principals now spend less time on instructional activities than they would like. This may be due to principals' expanded and time-consuming responsibilities. Many principals commented on the current lack of available time to spend on teachers' lesson plans, staff development, and assisting in classroom instruction. Nevertheless, Public Act 85-1418 specifically requires principals to be the instructional leaders of their schools. As stated in reform legislation, the principal's "primary responsibility is in the improvement of instruction."

Heck (1992) and others have found differential behavior among elementary school principals in both high-achieving and low-achieving schools. Major differences were found in the areas of regular classroom visitations, participation in and the promotion of discussions concerning instructional issues that relate to student achievement and systematic monitoring of student progress.

## SCHOOL PERSONNEL SELECTION

Prior to reform, schools were assigned a personnel coordinator in the central office who assisted in filling teacher vacancies. When these vacancies occurred, the coordinator identified a teacher candidate from an eligibility list and that teacher was then assigned to a school. Positions were also filled through voluntary transfers, administrative transfers, and responses to advertisements for Options for Knowledge and other special program positions. With the implementation of school reform, the duties of personnel staff in the central office have changed. Currently, prospective teachers must obtain state certification in their respective subject areas and then apply for an academic eligibility card in order to be considered for a teaching position. After these credentials are in place, the prospective teachers are referred to a personnel coordinator in the central office who provides them with a list of schools with vacant positions. The prospective teachers are advised to send resumes and letters of application to the schools and to request interviews with the principals, who now act as the hiring agents for their schools. Once a prospective teacher has been selected by a principal, Teacher Personnel is notified through a letter and completes the necessary paperwork for staffing.

The local school process for selecting staff varies from school to school. Principals may advertise for teachers through the *Personnel Bulletin* or make their selection from the eligiblity list provided by the central office. LSCs can make recommendations to the principal regarding teaching applicants. Many principals exercise the option of including their LSCs in the staffing process; however, the principal is responsible for making the final selection and recommending the candidate to the General Superintendent of Schools for approval by the Board of Education. Central office staff in Teacher Personnel counsel principals in matters of staffing and monitor school staffing.

This survey asked principals and Local School Council members how they selected teachers and other school personnel since the implementation of school reform. The findings are presented in Table 9.

**TABLE 9**

Principal and Local School Council: **How do you select your school personnel since the implementation of school reform?**

| | Response Category | Principal Frequency | Council Frequency |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Principal with teacher input | 8 (32%) | 1 ( 4%) |
| 2. | Principal with LSC input | 4 (16%) | 10 (40%) |
| 3. | LSC is involved in the process but final decision is with the principal | 3 (12%) | 2 ( 8%) |
| 4. | Principal | 8 (32%) | 11 (44%) |
| 5. | Central Office | 2 ( 8%) | 1 ( 4%) |

N=25

About one-third of the time, the principals selected school personnel. The same frequency was reported for principal and teachers making the selection. On occasion, the central office still controlled the process to ensure that certification and faculty integregation requirements were met.

LSC participation in staffing varied from total to perfunctory involvement. Most councils saw the staffing process as either the principal's sole decision or as a group consensus. Principals reported that if LSC involvement occurred, it usually took place during the selection process or when a final decision was about to be made. By and large, LSC members concurred with this response. At some schools, LSCs had greater input in the selection of career service personnel than in the selection of teaching staff.

Principals were also surveyed on staffing practices before reform. These data are presented in Table 10 for comparison.

**TABLE 10**

Principal: **How did you do it (select personnel) prior to reform?**

| | Response Category | Principal Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Central Office | 4 (16%) |
| 2. | Principal | 6 (24%) |
| 3. | Principal with teacher input | 9 (36%) |
| 4 | Principal with LSIC input | 3 (12%) |
| 5. | Other | 3 (12%) |

N=25

Prior to reform, most personnel matters were determined in the central office; however, 84 percent of the principals interviewed indicated that they had a sense of control in staff selection because of their ability to select staff for Options for Knowledge and other special programs. Currently, some principals feel that the central office still retains too much control in staff selection because it continues to check all teacher credentials and monitors each school's compliance with racial/ethnic staffing requirements. Other principals did not perceive this to be a problem, indicating that they had a collaborative relationship with their personnel coordinator in the central office.

## SCHOOL PERSONNEL SELECTION
## SUMMARY

Prior to reform, staffing was conducted almost exclusively through the central office with little or no control by the schools except in the hiring of teachers for Options for Knowledge or special education programs. Now staffing is handled locally at the school level. Reform has given the principals' flexibility in hiring their own staff. One of the principals in Ford's (1991) study indicated, "You might say students have been better served because for the first time this year, when I had a vacancy, I did not have to take the teacher that the personnel department sent me. . . .I know I had a much better teacher than I would have had under the old way of doing things." (p. 5)

Even though reform has given principals authority to select their own school staff, the process varies across schools. Responses from principals indicated that the following individuals could be involved in the selection process:

- Principal and school staff (mainly teachers)
- Principal and LSCs (LSCs were either totally involved in the process or not involved until a final decision was required on a consensual basis)
- Principal alone.

From the LSC's perspective, selection of staff was handled primarily by the principal or by the principal and the LSCs on a consensual basis.

## BUDGET

A school expenditure plan is prepared by the principal in consultation with the Local School Council (LSC) and the Professional Personnel Advisory Committee (PPAC) with respect to all funds. The School Improvement Plan, which includes the school's annual budget, must be approved by a majority vote of the LSC. The expenditure plan is administered by the principal and should be monitored by the LSC. The LSCs can request a report on the expenditures in a school's internal accounts.

The following questions compare the principals' and LSCs' roles in developing a school budget before and after reform. The findings regarding the principals' roles before reform are presented in Table 11.

**TABLE 11**

Principal: **How did you participate in developing the school budget prior to school reform?**

| Response Category | Principal Frequency |
|---|---|
| 1. Had no control | 19 (76%) |
| 2. Same (no change) | 6 (24%) |

N=25

Data reveal that prior to reform principals felt they had no control over school expenditures since their budget was predetermined in the central office. One principal said that it was difficult to make changes in the budget; the most one could do was maintain the school program budget. The six (24 percent) principals who indicated "no change" in budget participation also indicated that they incorporated a "needs assessment" into the school's budget and had a viable Local School Council that held hearings and discussions and allowed voting on the budget.

Principals were also asked if their role in budget development changed since reform and if it had, how. The findings are presented in Table 12.

**TABLE 12**

Principal: **Has your role in budget development changed since school reform was implemented? If "yes," how?**

| Response Category | Principal Frequency |
|---|---|
| 1. Yes | 20 (80%) |
| 2. No | 5 (20%) |

N=25

A large percentage of respondents indicated that their budget development role has changed since reform. The responses show that budget development has become a consensus-based, open, and cooperative process. As indicated in the School Improvement Plan, more flexibility now exists in budget preparation and spending based on school needs. In addition, there is increased monitoring of school funds at the local level.

Most schools now receive some discretionary money and many receive a great deal more since reform. Schools now have complete control and flexibility regarding the expenditure of this money. Budget-making tends to be an open process with input coming from teachers, principal, LSCs, and other interested individuals.

Principals were also asked about any changes in their role in the management of discretionary funds since implementation of the school reform. Table 13 presents the findings.

**TABLE 13**

Principal: **Has your role changed in the management of discretionary funds since the implementation of school reform? If "yes," how?**

| Response | Principal Frequency |
|---|---|
| 1. Yes | 17 (68%) |
| 2. No | 4 (16%) |
| 3. Few discretionary funds | 4 (16%) |

N=25

The majority of principals responding "yes" to this question indicated that subsequent to changes in their management of discretionary funds, they now--

- work with various groups
- share information and receive input from their LSCs
- obtain approval from their LSCs
- control discretionary funds
- receive more money but have difficulty monitoring it.

Four principals indicated "no change" in their role. Upon further questioning, it was determined that they had--

- less group decision-making and input
- little discretionary money
- LSCs that were more involved in raising funds than in internal accounts or people who had been involved prior to reform.

One principal reported:

> There used to be just books and supplies. We just gave it to a teachers' committee and they would tell me their needs and we would spend it. There are now arduous drawn out discussions for every budget item. It's more complicated because they give you a lump sum of money. People come to the meeting and say that they want this and others want that. A subcommittee looks at all the material and determines what is most important. The secretary (LSC) is a very competent computer man and he analyzes all of the information. I'm just acting like a consultant. They ask me what I think and I tell them.

Another principal indicated that the role change regarding discretionary funds has been mainly in staff development area: "The central office does not provide it. Now it's determined by us."

A Local School Council member said: "We have a great deal of say in what happens here, and, as I said, we have made some major changes in the ways we structure our days thanks to our discretionary funds. Everyone is pleased with the kinds of things that are happening in that direction."

Over all, schools receive more State Chapter 1 money and have more control of it in terms of spending and monitoring. Principals keep LSCs informed and keep detailed records of expenditures which can become a tedious job, especially when schools receive a large amount of Chapter 1 funding.

**TABLE 14**

Local School Council: **How did you participate in developing the school budget?**

| Response Category | | Council Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Reviewed the prepared plan, discussed, and voted on it. | 12 (48%) |
| 2. | Actively involved as a group; prepared the plan and participated in every decision. | 3 (12%) |
| 3. | Involved as part of team. | 5 (20%) |
| 4. | Question not applicable. | 1 ( 4%) |
| 5. | Mainly voted on the prepared plan. | 3 (12%) |
| 6. | Other | 1 ( 4%) |

N=25

Altogether, 80 percent of responding LSCs are involved to some degree in preparing a budget plan. Three respondents (12 percent) indicated that they were very active. As a group they prepared the budget plan and were involved in all decisions related to finance. Forty-eight percent indicated that the principal prepared the plan (except one which was prepared solely by teachers). The LSCs reviewed, discussed and then voted on these budgets. Another 20 percent indicated that they worked as a group on the plan. Only 12 percent indicated that their sole involvement was voting on the final version of the budget plan. One school indicated that it did not receive Chapter 1 money and, therefore, this particular question was not applicable.

On the whole, the Local School Councils were involved in preparing budget plans but maintained an advisory role, which the reform legislation expects. The LSCs did indicate that they voted on the final version of the budget, regardless of their degree of input in its preparation.

Both principals and LSCs were questioned regarding the decisions LSCs made regarding discretionary funds. Findings are presented in Table 15.

**TABLE 15**

Principal and Local School Council: **Does the LSC make decisions related to discretionary funds? If "yes," how?**

| | Response Category | Principal Frequency | Council Frequency |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Involved very actively in all budgetary issues. | 10 (40%) | 7 (28%) |
| 2. | Discussed recommendations and suggestions in the expenditure plan and provided approval. | 4 (16%) | 9 (36%) |
| 3. | Involved in big decisions and purchases. | 1 ( 4%) | 1 ( 4%) |
| 4. | Approved expenditure plan. | 4 (16%) | 4 (16%) |
| 5. | LSC would like to be informed. | 2 ( 8%) | 0 |
| 6. | Little or no involvement. | 4 (16%) | 4 (16%) |

N=25

As indicated in the preceding table, LSC involvement varied in decisions regarding discretionary funding. There was an 80 percent match between council and principal's response in the same school on this item. The reform expectation that 100 percent of the Local School Councils would be involved through both a recommendation and review process of the school expenditure plan has not occurred. Principals (60 percent) reported that the councils were involved, while only 45 percent of the LSCs felt they were. It is anticipated that these percentages will increase as councils become more knowledgeable in budgeting and more fully understand their monitoring responsibilities.

Two-thirds of the respondents indicated some LSC involvement in the financial aspects of their school; however, the type of involvement varied. Some LSCs were involved very actively, even in details; some just wanted to be kept informed; and one indicated the LSC wanted to be involved only in "big" decisions.

## BUDGET
## SUMMARY

Prior to reform, nearly 70 percent of the principals indicated that they had "little" to "no control" over their budgets. Since reform was implemented, 80 percent of the respondents indicated that their role in budget development has changed, and 68 percent indicated that their role has changed regarding discretionary funds. Principals, in consultation with their LSCs, are now required to prepare a School Improvement Plan, with budget allocations that support the plan's goals. Principals noted that budget preparation is now a more open process. They discuss it with their LSCs, incorporate the council's input and suggestions, and obtain their approval. Since reform, schools receive more discretionary money and have more flexibility in spending.

In the area of discretionary funds, LSCs assumed various roles in budget preparation and decision-making. In most instances, the expenditure plan was prepared by the principal in consultation with school staff and the LSC. Of the respondents, 40 percent of the principals and 28 percent of LSCs indicated that the council was actively involved in all aspects of budgeting.

Occasionally, all the LSCs did was review the prepared plan and approve it. In some instances they would question the principal and discuss the plan until they were able to accept it. A small number of respondents indicated that the LSCs were involved only in "big" decisions or approved of the plan as it was presented because they were required to do so.

## SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

The School Reform Act of 1988 requires each attendance center with an elected Local School Council to prepare a three-year School Improvement Plan (SIP) that addresses requirements in *The School Code of Illinois*. The purpose is twofold:

- To serve as a blueprint for the improvement of the school and the education of its students
- To ensure that the goals contained in the legislation are met within the allotted time.

The SIP must also address goals established by the Board of Education and may include goals set by the LSC.

The SIP is to be developed by the principal in consultation with the Local School Council, staff, parents, and community residents. Once the plan is developed, it must be approved by a majority of the LSC members. The principal is responsible for implementation of the plan, while the Local School Council and district superintendent are responsible for its monitoring.

The purposes of the following questions were to learn what procedures or steps were used in different schools to prepare the SIP. The findings are reported in Table 16.

**TABLE 16**

Principal and Local School Council: **Describe, briefly, the process of developing the School Improvement Plan in your school.**

| Response Category | Principal Frequency | Council Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Intensive group efforts with a planning team and/or committee. | 7 (68%) | 15 (60%) |
| 2. Input through evaluation or needs assessment. | 8 (32%) | 15 (60%) |
| 3. Principal had the major role. | 12 (48%) | 7 (28%) |
| 4. LSC involvement and approval. | 8 (32%) | 11 (44%) |
| 5. LSC actively involved by coordinating a committee and considering input from others. | 0 | 9 (36%) |

N=25

The school improvement planning process is a very individualized effort at each school. Approximately 90 percent of the respondents indicated that their School Improvement Plan was a product of a group effort. There was considerable overlap in the ways the principal and the council members described the planning process in their school. Intensive group efforts, with planning teams and committee work, occurred at 68 percent of the responding schools according to principals and at 60 percent of the responding schools according to council members. Many schools reported using input through an evaluation or needs assessment process with several schools hiring consultants as facilitators.

The following quotes, received from four schools, are indicative of the variety of approaches.

- CANAL really facilitated the development of the process. From the model school program were learned 'consensus building' techniques. Teachers and the council members met and discussed their needs. They would list all of their needs and, through discussion, cut the list back to 15 items. Following that a process called 'Spend-A-Buck' was used to list and establish priorities. This year, the number one priority was lower class size and next a full-time nurse and social worker. These were far too expensive, but we were able to get a nurse and a social worker for two to three hours a day after school. We had an excellent instructor in consensus building.

- During the first year I gathered information, presented it to the council, and they adopted it. This year, the assistant principals,

the teacher-facilitator, the council, the counselor, the chairperson, and I worked on the SIP together.

- We started by having meetings with parents and school staff. There was a great deal of input because we involved everyone. The plan was then condensed by the principal. LSC members received their own copy which they had time to review. The results were positive even though we may not have gone over it thoroughly.

- This process caused us some early frustration. We worked very hard and went through the process exactly the way we thought we were supposed to. We believed that we were supposed to develop a three-year plan and took time, reviewed every item, and developed our plan. Now we have learned that every year we are supposed to develop a three-year plan. This has been discouraging for our council, but like everything else, we are getting used to it.

Although nearly all SIPs were developed cooperatively, most of the principals but fewer of the council members indicated that they played a major role in developing their three-year School Improvement Plan. It may have been the thought of those principals who did not involve their LSC members in the SIP that their council members lacked knowledge and experience in this area of planning.

The role of the LSC in developing the SIP was varied. Some councils conducted an item-by-item review; others focused on discretionary moneys; and others acted as facilitators by asking for input, conducting surveys, encouraging PPAC input, or directly suggesting changes. Schools participating in the CANAL Project used techniques learned from project facilitators.

**TABLE 17**

Principal and Local School Council: **What was your role in the process of developing the Local School Improvement Plan?**

| | Response Category | Principal Frequency | Council Frequency |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Facilitator or coordinator | 9 (36%) | 1 ( 4%) |
| 2. | Part of team | 5 (20%) | 14 (56%) |
| 3. | Leader | 6 (24%) | 4 (16%) |
| 4. | Approval and signature | 3 (12%) | 6 (24%) |
| 5. | Supportive process | 2 ( 8%) | 3 (12%) |

N=25

Table 17 indicates that most principals played a major role in preparing the School Improvement Plan. The preceding question asked the respondents to describe their specific role in developing the SIP. Many said they were facilitators or coordinators. They were responsible for bringing the group together, encouraging their input, acting as a colleague, resource person, and/or mentor. LSC members perceived their role as being part of the team for preparing and approving the SIP.

The response categories indicate that a majority of principals and councils collaborated in the preparation of the SIP. Four LSCs stated that they played a leadership role in preparing the plan.

Table 18 shows how monitoring of the SIP is conducted at different school sites.

**TABLE 18**

Principal and Local School Council: **Who monitors implementation of the plan?**

| Response Category | Principal Frequency | Council Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| 1. LSC | 5 (20%) | 4 (16%) |
| 2. LSC and Principal | 3 (12%) | 7 (28%) |
| 3. LSC and PPAC | 4 (16%) | 3 (12%) |
| 4. Principal | 8 (32%) | 7 (28%) |
| 5. Principal and PPAC | 2 ( 8%) | 2 ( 8%) |
| 6. PPAC | 1 ( 4%) | 1 ( 4%) |
| 7. CANAL Core Planning Team | 1 ( 4%) | 1 ( 4%) |
| 8. District Office | 1 ( 4%) | 0 |

N=25

In the critical area of who monitors implementation of the plan, both the LSCs and the principals reported a wide variety of approaches. In another study (Mueller, Marchiafava, and Baugher, 1991), 80 percent of LSC members said that they received periodic monitoring reports from school staff regarding implementation of LSC policies.

A significant number of principals was involved in monitoring SIPs, even though this is a designated duty of the LSCs. This is an area which LSCs need further training and assistance since the monitoring role needs to be clarified. One available resource is the *Comprehensive Planning for School Improvement* (1992), which includes a School Improvement Plan Monitoring Instrument for quarterly and annual reporting purposes to assist LSCs and district office personnel in their monitoring responsibilities.

## SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN
## SUMMARY

During the second year of reform implementation, a majority of principals indicated that their LSCs cooperated in writing the SIP. LSCs are now becoming more familiar with the SIP process, feel more comfortable with this task, and know more about their role and responsibilities in assisting in the preparation of the SIP. By and large, the LSCs worked as a team with the school staff and principal in writing the SIP. Both principals and LSCs perceived their role in the process as cooperative, collegial, and facilitative. In some schools, either the principal or the LSCs had the primary function of writing the SIP, even though it should be prepared by the principal in consultation with the LSC.

The development of the School Improvement Plan was a group effort in 90 percent of the schools as reported by both principals and council members. As documented in two other studies, LSCs at first concentrated on school governance, with their local school plans focusing on school security and physical environment. The inclusion of curriculum and instruction is now becoming evident in Local School Plans (Hess, 1992); (Nowakowski, Stewart, & Quinn, 1992). Since there is no one way that plans need to be developed, principals' roles can include that of facilitator, coordinator, team member, leader, and supporter.

In nearly half of the surveyed schools, the SIP was monitored by the LSCs as part of their responsibility under state law; however, LSCs need further training and encouragement in order to take responsibility for participating in writing and monitoring SIPs.

## LEADERSHIP

Principals were asked if school reform changed their management of daily administrative and supervisory responsibilities in terms of student activities, teacher supervision, and parent, community, and LSC issues (public relations). And, if so, to explain how.

Responses in the area of student activities are shown in Table 19.

**TABLE 19**

Principal: **Has school reform changed your management of daily administrative and supervisory responsibilities in terms of student activity? If "yes," how?**

| Response Category | Principal Frequency |
|---|---|
| 1. No change | 9 (36%) |
| 2. Less time available | 5 (20%) |
| 3. More parent interest and involvement | 4 (16%) |
| 4. Discipline changes | 3 (12%) |
| 5. Principal visibility | 1 ( 4%) |

N=25

Among the principals surveyed, 36 percent indicated no change in their management or supervision of student activities. One possible explanation for this might be LSCs deferred to the principal's experience and expertise in student activities.

It was also found that reform implementation reduced the amount of time the principal had to manage or supervise student activities. There was an increase, however, in parent interest and participation in student activities.

Findings on how school reform has affected management of daily administrative and supervisory responsibilities in the area of teacher supervision are reported in Table 20.

**TABLE 20**

Principal: **Has school reform changed your management of daily administrative and supervisory responsibilities in terms of teacher supervision? If "yes," how?**

| Response Category | Principal Frequency |
|---|---|
| 1. No change | 14 (56%) |
| 2. Less time for supervision | 9 (36%) |
| 3. Role clarification | 2 ( 8%) |

N=25

The two main findings in responses to this question were that a considerable number of principals (56 percent) felt there was no change in their supervision of teachers and another (8 percent) felt there was no change other than role clarification. However, a significant number of principals cited a lack of time for staff supervision with all of the other responsibilities they have assumed since the implementation of school reform.

The next item on the questionnaire sought to determine what, if any, changes school reform made in the principals' management of daily administrative and supervisory responsibilities relative to parent, community, and LSC issues (public relations). The principals' responses are shown in Table 21.

**TABLE 21**

Principal: **Has school reform changed your management of daily administrative and supervisory responsibilities in terms of parent, community, and LSC issues (public relations)? If "Yes," how?**

| Response Category | Principal Frequency |
|---|---|
| 1. Encourage more parent and community involvement | 13 (52%) |
| 2. More serious about input from parents/community | 3 (12%) |
| 3. No change | 3 (12%) |
| 4. Involvement with news media | 6 (24%) |

N=25

Principals (52 percent) indicated that they encourage more parental and community involvement in school affairs. Additionally, they are more conscious of their manner and responses toward parents and the community and take suggestions from these groups more seriously. Principals who had already involved parents/community in their school did not notice a significant change.

More than one-third of the principals reported no change in their administrative and supervisory responsibilities concerning students. With regard to teachers, more than one-half indicated no change. In their responsibilities toward parents, 12 percent indicated no change.

Principals were asked how they would characterize their leadership style under reform. The same question was asked of Local School Council respondents. The results are presented in Table 22.

**TABLE 22**

Principal: **How would you characterize your leadership style?**

Local School Council: **How would you characterize your school principal's leadership style?**

| Response Category | Principal Frequency | Council Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Collaborative | 17 (68%) | 10 (40%) |
| 2. Strong Leader | 3 (12%) | 2 ( 8%) |
| 3. Involved | 2 ( 8%) | 5 (20%) |
| 4. Facilitator | 2 ( 8%) | 5 (20%) |
| 5. Authoritarian | 1 ( 4%) | 2 ( 8%) |
| 6. Other | | 1 ( 4%) |

N=25

As the table indicates, a majority of the responding principals (68 percent) characterized their leadership style as collaborative:

- Building trust and trusting people
- Being fair
- Being open in interactions with colleagues
- Maintaining visibility in the school
- Exhibiting a willingness to work with others
- Understanding
- Showing a willingness to discuss issues directly and accepting input from others
- Arriving at decisions through consensus
- Establishing a collegial relationship with peers.

This view was also held by the LSCs (40 percent). They perceived the principal's leadership style as mostly collaborative. All 10 council members who characterized their principal as collaborative matched their principal's response; six other council members (64 percent) in the other categories also agreed.

LSCs (20 percent) viewed their principals' leadership role as facilitative (mediator, resource person) and involved. The principals' involvement in school affairs included:

- Having a good relationship with students and their parents
- Involving staff in decision-making
- Maintaining high visibility in the building
- Monitoring faculty
- Seeking innovative classroom instructional methods

It is obvious that a many leadership styles are exercised in the Chicago Public Schools. Piscolish, LeMahieu, McMurray and Wallace (1992) found that in Pittsburg eight percent of the principals were autocratic, 33 percent were consultative, and 58 percent were consensus-based. Their data indicate that what is effective in one location might not work in another and that perceptions of style can vary both within and among schools. The perception among a majority of survey respondents was that in Chicago, after reform,

principals' leadership style could be categorized as collaborative and collegial rather than authoritarian. Only one principal characterized the leadership style as authoritarian. Interestingly, that same principal was perceived by the LSC respondent as one who cared for children and was a good facilitator.

## LEADERSHIP
## SUMMARY

The findings in Tables 19 and 20 illustrate that principals find less time to spend on student activities and teacher supervision. Reform takes a good deal of the principal's time in other activities, such as meetings and the paper work required to prepare for these meetings.

Another important finding is that some schools still operate as they did before reform implementation. This is not necessarily negative. Many schools had a high degree of parent/community involvement before reform. This involvement continues and the input is welcomed in school decision-making. In schools where the principal's management style was effective, the LSCs have allowed them to continue operating in a manner that worked.

Survey findings indicate greater parent/community involvement in school activities since the implementation of reform. This is encouraged by the principals. Principals take seriously the suggestions of parents and community members when making decisions that involve the welfare of the school and the students.

Items dealing with leadership style showed that a majority of principals exercised their leadership role in a collaborative manner. Another study indicated:

> It is clear that leadership style is related to implementation of shared decision-making. Where Memphis school principals' leadership styles were democratic, shared decision-making processes were implemented more quickly and school climate improved. This predicts that curricular, instructional, and other programmatic changes will follow more quickly in democratically led schools than in schools with authoritarian or laissez-faire principals. (Etheridge, Valesky, Horgan, Nunnery, and Smith, 1992, p. 17).

## CONCLUSIONS

This study surveyed principals' perceptions of their roles before and after school reform in the following areas of responsibility:

- Administration
- Instructional Leadership
- School Personnel Selection
- Budget
- School Improvement Plan
- Leadership.

Following are the summary findings in these areas:

- **Principals' roles and responsibilities have been greatly expanded.**

  Principals perceive their present tasks as political (dealing with LSCs), preparing the school budget, selecting school staff, and dealing with administrative paper work. These tasks were confirmed by school council representatives. The new responsibilities are time-consuming and demanding. During interviews, most of the principals indicated that in addition to the regular school day they must spend many hours in order to accomplish these responsibilities. This is in line with Brown (1990) and Clune and White (1988) who found that implementing school-based management required a significant amount of time on the part of the principal.

- **Principals' involvement in instructional activities has been reduced because of new demands on their in-school time.**

  The areas affected include staff development, lesson plan reviews, classroom visitations, as well as student activities and teacher supervision.

- **Most principals share decision-making with their LSCs.**

  Additionally, principals are encouraging more parental and community involvement in school affairs and taking suggestions and input from these elements more seriously than they did prior to reform. This requires good interpersonal skills.

- **Most principals involve their school councils in the preparation of the school budget.**

  Prior to reform, principals had minimum control over their school budget which was prepared in the central office. Since reform, the budget is prepared locally by the principals in consultation with their LSCs. Surveyed principals indicated that budget preparation is an open process, involving input, suggestions, and approval from the school councils.

- **Preparation of the School Improvement Plan is a cooperative effort between the principals and LSCs in most schools; however, effective monitoring of the plan's implementation is not yet in place.**

Principals are responsible for the preparation of their School Improvement Plan in consultation with their LSCs. It is the LSCs' responsibility to monitor implementation of the plan.

- **Principals perceive their leadership role as collaborative.**

  Principals perform their leadership role by building trust, being flexible in discussing issues, accepting input from others, arriving at decisions on a consensual basis, and establishing collegial relationships.

In addition, research literature indicates the following:

- **Principals need assistance in identifying resources available to their school.**

- **Newly assigned principals need training and support, particularly in such areas as human relations, coaching teachers, delegating duties, sharing decision-making, planning, and time-management.**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Training in task and time-management should be provided to principals to enable them to handle their responsibilities more efficiently.

- Dealings with the public and LSCs requires knowledge and training in communication, group dynamics, problem-solving, and shared decision-making.

- Clarification is needed in the roles and responsibilities of principals and LSCs. Although data indicate cooperation and good faith efforts between the principals and their LSCs, there are some schools in which the School Improvement Plan was not a cooperative effort. Also, monitoring of the implementation of the SIP needs to be put in place. LSCs may feel lacking in these responsibilities.

- A large amount of principals' time is spent on activities such as required paper work and meetings. Principals need time to direct their efforts toward more educational and instructional activities such as staff development, student activities, staff supervision, classroom visitation, and reviewing lesson plans.

- Principals, LSCs and, committee members for staffing should be trained in procedures for the fair and equitable selection of staff.

- PPACs need a clear definition of their role and an awareness of of available resources. In this study, it was found that the PPACs were not empowered and, therefore, had little say-so in the actual running of the school.

- Principals need to establish a peer network to share concerns, problems, solutions, and successes.

- Videotapes should be developed to provide school councils with assistance in carrying out their responsibilities.

- The School Improvement Plan process should be reviewed to determine if it meets the substantive needs of both the reform legislation and the spirit of consensual decision-making.

## APPENDIX A

**Initial Survey**

SCHOOL POLICY SURVEY

Local School

1. How are policies developed at your school since November 1, 1989?

_____

_____

_____

| | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| 2. Were any policies revised or implemented at your school? | ☐ | ☐ |

If **yes** please continue this survey. If **no**, stop here.

3. Please answer the following survey keeping in mind one major policy initiative at your school and answer the following questions with reference to that policy. Please summarize this policy with a key phrase below.

_____

_____

_____

| | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| 4. Was this local school policy revised or adopted by the LSC? | ☐ | ☐ |
| 5. Is the school policy in writing? | ☐ | ☐ |
| 6. Was the school policy voted on? | ☐ | ☐ |

7. Who initiated the school policy?

7.1 Principal ___
7.2 Council Chair ___
7.3 Council member ___
7.4 Other ___

8. What need caused the school policy to be initiated?

8.1 School issue ___
8.2 Community Issue ___
8.3 Board Issue ___
8.4 Principal Issue ___
8.5 Council Member Issue ___
8.6 Student Issue ___
8.7 Other (please specify) ___

9. What procedural steps were required to initiate and achieve approval of a new school policy?

9.1 _____
9.2 _____
9.3 _____
9.4 _____
9.5 _____
9.6 _____
9.7 _____

10. Who implemented the LSC approved school policy?

10.1 Principal ___
10.2 Council Member ___
10.3 Staff ___
10.4 Other (please specify) ___

11. What method was used to inform the staff of the approved school policy?

11.1 School Bulletin ___
11.2 LSC Written Directive ___
11.3 Other ___

12. What procedural steps were used to implement school policy?

12.1 _____
12.2 _____
12.3 _____
12.4 _____
12.5 _____
12.6 _____
12.7 _____

| | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| 13. Was the approved school policy monitored? | ☐ | ☐ |

14. Who monitored the school policy?

14.1 Principal_____
14.2 LSC_____
14.3 Other_____

15. How was the school policy monitored?

15.1 Principal Observation_____
15.2 LSC Observation_____
15.3 PPAC Observation_____
15.4 Other_____

16. What result did monitoring the school policy have?

16.1 Change in LSC By-laws_____
16.2 Change in Teacher Handbook_____
16.3 Change in Student Handbook_____
16.4 Change in Parent Handbook_____
16.5 Other (please describe)_____

17. What procedural steps are used to monitor school policy?

17.1 _____
17.2 _____
17.3 _____
17.4 _____
17.5 _____
17.6 _____
17.7 _____

## APPENDIX B
**Interview Forms**

**CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS**
Department of Research, Evaluation and Planning
Bureau of Program Planning

# PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW FORM

**Administration**

1. What is your perception of the principal's present role in the Chicago Public Schools?

2. How did you perceive your role before school reform?

3. How has school reform affected your administrative decision making?

4. What are the most significant areas in which school reform has affected your responsibilities as a principal?

5. How has the LSC affected your leadership in the school?

6. Has school reform changed your daily routine?

   If "**yes,**" how?
   In what areas?

**Instructional Leadership**

7. What instructional activities were you involved in prior to school reform?

8. Have there been any significant changes in your involvement in instructional activities since school reform was implemented?

   **Note:** If the interviewee did not mention involvement in the following areas, the interviewer should ask about them--

   - Teachers' lesson plans
   - Staff development
   - Assisting in classroom instruction

9. Have instructional issues been placed on the LSC agenda for discussion and action?

   If "**yes,**" who placed the issues on the agenda?
   What areas of instruction did the issues cover?
   Why were they placed on the agenda?
   What were the results?

**School Personnel Selection**

10. How do you select your school personnel since the implementation of school reform?

**(Over)**

11. How did you do it prior to reform?

12. Is there a school policy concerning personnel selection?

    If "**yes,**" briefly describe the policy and how it was developed.

13. How have disagreements over staff selection been resolved?

**Budget**

14. How did you participate in developing the school budget prior to school reform?

15. Has your role in budget development changed since school reform was implemented? If "**yes,**" how?

16. Has your role changed in the management of discretionary funds since the implementation of school reform? If "**yes,**" how?

17. Does the LSC make decisions related to discretionary funds?

**School Improvement Plan**

18. Describe, briefly, the process of developing the School Improvement Plan in your school.

19. What was your role in this process?

20. Who else played a major role?

21. Who monitors implementation of the plan?

**Other Areas**

Has school reform changed your management of daily administrative and supervisory responsibilities in terms of:

22. Student activity? If "**yes,**" how?

23. Teacher supervision? If "**yes,**" how?

24. Parent, community, and LSC issues (public relations)? If "**yes,**" how?

    **Note a:** If the principal didn't cover the aspect of "time management," please ask about it.

    **Note b:** If questions 23-25 were answered in question 6, don't ask these questions.

25. How would you characterize your leadership style?

26. What would you suggest to make the principal's role more effective under school reform?

**CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS**
Department of Research, Evaluation and Planning
Bureau of Program Planning

# LOCAL SCHOOL COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON INTERVIEW FORM

## Administration

1. What is your perception of the principal's present role in the Chicago Public Schools?

2. How did you perceive the principal's role before school reform?

3. How has school reform affected your principal's administrative decision making?

4. How has the LSC affected your principal's leadership?

## Instructional Leadership

5. Have instructional issues been placed on the LSC agenda for discussion and action?

   If "**yes**," who did it?
   In what areas?
   Why?
   What were the results?

## School Personnel Selection

6. How has the school selected its personnel since the implementation of school reform?

7. Does your school have a policy concerning personnel selection?

   If "**yes**," briefly describe the policy and how it was developed.

8. How have disagreements about staff selection been resolved?

## Budget

9. How did you participate in developing the school budget?

10. Does the LSC make decisions related to discretionary funds?

    If "**yes**," how?

**(Over)**

**School Improvement Plan**

11. Describe, briefly, the process of developing the School Improvement Plan in your school.

12. What was your role in this process?

13. Who else played a major role in this process?

14. Who monitors the implementation of the plan?

**Other Areas**

15. How would you characterize your school principal's leadership style?

16. What would you suggest to make the principal's role more effective under school reform?

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